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ABSTRACT

This paper presents in outline form the following issues in developing programs in gerontology: getting started, support on campus, getting information, purpose of programs, organizational models, and multidisciplinary and multipurpose programs. (Author)

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DEVELOPING COLLEGE PROGRAMS IN GERONTOLOGY AND AGING

William C. Hays*

Presented at the 1975 Annual Meeting of the
National Council on Family Relations,
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DEVELOPING COLLEGE PROGRAMS IN GERONTOLOGY AND AGING

ABSTRACT

This paper presents in outline form the following issues in developing programs in Gerontology: getting started, support on campus, getting information, purpose of programs, organizational models, and multi-disciplinary and multipurpose programs.

DEVELOPING COLLEGE PROGRAMS IN GERONTOLOGY AND AGING

William C. Hays*

Getting Started

I. Why have gerontology programs - some pragmatic considerations.

A. Students are interested

1. It fits with the service orientation of many students.

2. It is applied rather than purely theoretical area.

3. According to the best available manpower estimates there are and will continue to be jobs available in the area.

4. Because of 1 through 3 above the courses will generate necessary credit hour production.

B. There are sufficient funding resources available to develop such programs.

C. There are high rewards in terms of community good will for the development of such programs.

1. Agencies in the community are interested in development of gerontology programs.

2. Because of the potential political power of the elderly, politicians support gerontology programs in terms of interest, ideology, and funding.

3. Gerontology programs are consistent with the demands of the public for higher education to provide services other than $100 a day consultation fees.

D. Gerontology programs, because of their emphasis upon applied training, and since they often draw students with some experience in aging, are adaptable to the current trend toward continuing and life-long learning.

E. The elderly citizens in the community are both interested in and highly capable of taking on important roles in the development of university programs.

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Getting Started (Continued)

F. There is something for everybody; all types of institutions of higher education have areas where they can make an important contribution.

II. Getting Information

A. Written materials

B. Professional Associations

1. Gerontological Society

2. Association for Gerontology in Higher Education

3. Almost all profession associations and societies in the social sciences have established either sections or task forces focused on aging.

C. Meetings, conferences, workshops - The most efficient source of information.

1. Find out what others are doing.

2. Make important contacts with community and agency personnel.

3. Find out about funding and gain some lead time to the short lead time in request for proposals.

4. Because of the nature of meetings high concentration of information in short period of time. Don't forget to collect brochures and handouts on other programs.

III. Support on Campus

A. Administrative

1. Argue on the pragmatic basis for program development - with most administrators the promise of generating credit hours, funding and community support in face of the cutbacks for more traditional programs in all three is all the encouragement needed.

2. Generate ground swell by demonstrating community, faculty, and student support. One successful conference can usually demonstrate this.

3. Simple demographic projections are enlightening to many administrators.

III. Support on Campus (Continued)

4. Money talks!!!

5. Administrative support is important because of the cross department, discipline, and college nature of gerontology. The usual administrative channels can't deal with this, so support at the dean level or higher is needed.

B. Faculty

1. The interest and resources are usually already available.

2. Form an ad hoc committee and it will usually snowball. The major problem is not too little interest, but more interested faculty than you can integrate in the beginning of your program development.

Purpose of Programs

I. Academic Programs

A. Advanced degrees

1. Training of trainers approach

2. Researchers

3. Professional level practitioners

B. Undergraduate programs

1. Degree and Specialized Programs

a. social services

b. administrators

c. health care practioners

d. pre-graduate training

2. Associate of arts degrees - i.e. nurses aids

3. General increase in course offerings in each department

4. Increasing course content as it deals with aging in all courses.

Purpose of Programs (Continued)

C. Non-traditional students

1. Second career

2. Experiential learning

3. Joint degree programs

II. Continuing education

A. Courses specifically for the elderly

1. Lifelong learning

2. Applied needs specifically for elderly (pre-retirement workshops)

B. Training for those presently providing services to the elderly

1. Concentrated retraining

2. In-services training

3. Up-dating skills (continuing education, requirements for certification, etc.)

III. Community Service

A. Provision of university faculty as advisors and consultants for service delivery agencies for the elderly in the community.

B. Research

1. Ad hoc applied research

2. General and "pure" research motivated by traditional academic concerns.

C. Information and referral services.

D. Direct Service delivery

1. Health related testing and consultation.

2. Conferences and workshops-continuing education functions.

Some Administrative and Faculty Objectives

I. Administrative Objectives

A. To provide a general policy atmosphere that encourages programs in gerontology.

B. To provide legitimate administrative roles, responsibilities, and authority to ensure continuation and linkage of the various parts of the gerontology program.

C. To encourage adequate rewards and recognition of faculty and staff who participate in gerontology programs

II. Faculty Objectives

A. To increase knowledge of all faculty in the area of aging.

B. To provide specialized competencies in gerontology by the development of present faculty resources or the recruitment of faculty where needed.

C. To promote research among faculty in the area of gerontology.

Organizational Models*

I. Single Program Model

A. May be multiple purpose research, training, service, or any combination of these.

B. Usually have charismatic leadership - programs dependent on key individuals.

C. Tend to be flexible, but are very personnel dependent.

II. Functional Problem Resolution Model

A. Single problem resolution (NASA or RAND type programs) i. e. transportation for the elderly.

B. Program phases out when problem solved.

C. Difficult to disband the bureaucracy.

*Tom Hickey, Pennsylvania State University, Presented at Region VII Symposium for Faculty, Kansas City, Missouri, November 20-22, 1974.

Organizational Models (Continued)

III. Center Entity Model

A. Independent center, i.e., Andrus at USC.

B. These work best at private universities.

C. To many institutions try to become miniatures of Andrus.

IV. Interdisciplinary and Diffuse Model

A. No strong center.

B. Strong research focus.

C. Multi-disciplinary focus, i.e., Chicago.

V. State Recognized Consortia Model

A. Central coordinated state wide program, i.e., Penn State and Michigan.

B. State directed rather than federal.

VI. Emerging Model

A. State university and state agency on aging partnership.

B. Mutual agreement on program design and priorities.

C. Both career and short term training.

D. Resource sharing with 2 and 4 year colleges.

E. Encourage basic and applied research.

Why Multidisciplinary Programs

I. Nature of Gerontology

A. Gerontology is not a single discipline.

B. Faculty need identification with parent discipline.

C. Gerontology is an area that requires multiple interrelated approaches.

II. Practical Considerations

A. Rewards lie within disciplines for faculty members

Why Multidisciplinary Programs (Continued)

B. Easier to provide hard funding.

C. Efficiency in development of programs.

Why Multi-purpose Programs

I. It is expected (demanded) by the community.

II. Once faculty competencies are developed it is difficult to isolate purposes.

III. Pressure from funding sources in multi-purpose programs.

Major Problem Areas

I. Administration

A. Coordination and linkage functions necessary for multi-disciplinary and multi-purpose programs is difficult to attain; i.e., liberal arts vs. health related professions, traditional academics and continuing education.

B. Rewards for faculty are low for program development; as Walter Beattie said:

"That the status of gerontology in higher education is similar to the status of older persons in the society-low in visibility, low in prestige, and low in recognition and rewards."

C. Turf issues - between universities, universities vs. junior colleges, department vs. department.

Optimistic Signs

I. Increased concern and vocalization of the concern by older persons.

II. Increased funding at all levels for aging related educational programs.

III. Increased concern among the legislature at national and local levels.